ED 441 553

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 553 PS 028 285

TITLE Family Forever: Reunification through Family-Focused Foster Care. A Discussion Guide [with Videotape].
INSTITUTION Child Welfare League of America, Inc., Washington, DC.; Prince George's County Dept. of Social Services, Upper Marlboro, MD.
ISBN ISBN-0-87868-763-7
PUB DATE 1999-00-00
NOTE 0p.; Videotape not available from ERIC.
AVAILABLE FROM Child Welfare League of America, Inc., 440 First Street, NW, Third Floor, Washington, DC 20001-2085 (includes 17:26-minute VHS videotape). Tel: 202-638-2952; Fax: 202-638-4004; Web site: http://www.cwla.org; e-mail: books@cwla.org.
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom (055) -- Non-Print Media (100)
EDRS PRICE Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Biological Parents; Caseworker Approach; *Foster Care; *Foster Children; *Foster Family; *Mother Attitudes; Parents; Social Workers
IDENTIFIERS Caseworker Client Relationship; Family Reunification

ABSTRACT

Maryland is one of five states piloting the Family to Family Initiative to assist child welfare systems to improve outcomes for foster families and children. This videotape and discussion guide were developed as part of the Initiative's training efforts. The 18-minute videotape presents 4 birth mothers telling the stories of how they became overwhelmed by problems and could not care for their children. The mothers share their feelings toward social workers and foster parents immediately following the removal of their children. The mothers recount how, after their experience with family-focused foster care, these feelings changed, and how, although their families were reunited, they hoped their relationships with the foster families would continue for a long time. The discussion guide is presented in six chapters. Chapter 1 presents background information on family-focused foster care. Chapter 2 provides an introduction to the families featured in the video and offers details about family members that will affect decision making and planning for children. Chapters 3 through 5 examine the changing role of the foster parent, the social worker, and the birth parent within the context of family-focused foster care. Each of these chapters presents discussion questions to consider and suggestions about how foster parents, social workers, and birth parents can become more family-focused. Each chapter also offers points to remember about the changing role. Chapter 6 delineates changes that foster parents, social workers, and birth parents may experience as they move toward family-focused foster care. (Contains 20 references.) (KB)

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